

February 27, 2023

Written testimony submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Housing Committee in support of SB 4, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Present and Future Housing Needs.

Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

I am Ruth Alcabes and live in West Hartford. I'm a member of Congregation P'nai Or of West Hartford, and my congregation is a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA), a broad-based organization of 49 faith institutions working together on this issue.

I am testifying in support of a rent cap and in support of SB 4, and, in particular, the portion on rent caps with amendments to better protect tenants:

- A rent cap of no more than 3%
- Coverage in between tenants
- Expand good cause eviction protections so tenants have security in their homes

Connecticut's average rent increase in the past 2 years has been 20%, which is increasing evictions and driving homelessness for many. Hartford's homeless population increased by 13% in 2022 after years of decline. On the other hand, predictable increases help neighborhood stability. Research from other places has shown that rent stabilization policies are effective at increasing affordability and stability for current tenants, and at protecting many households from displacement.

The rent increases in Connecticut during 2021-2022 was far more than inflation, and during that period, corporate landlords' profits greatly increased. This proposed policy is designed to protect Connecticut renters from predatory rent-gouging, which disproportionately affects Black and immigrant community members.

I strongly support a rent cap, but SB 4 would be stronger with the following changes:

- The cap should be lower; a cap of 3% tracks pre-pandemic average rent increases (which was about 2.5%) and would be affordable and predictable to tenants.
- It should cover apartments in between tenants so landlords can't push out tenants to increase the rent.
- It should expand good cause eviction protections to cover all tenants, so they have greater stability in their homes.

I support this bill because it is the right and just thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do for Connecticut. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ruth Alcabes
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